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## **What policies can the United States implement in order to improve its efforts to transition those with learning disabilities into the workplace**

Gregory Allen Jones

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WHAT POLICIES CAN THE UNITED STATES IMPLEMENT IN  
ORDER TO IMPROVE ITS EFFORTS TO TRANSITION  
THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES INTO  
THE WORKPLACE

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Special Education

---

by  
Gregory Allen Jones

September 2008

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Gregory Allen Jones  
September 2008

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## ABSTRACT

The project's purpose is to examine what strategies can be devised to transition those with learning disabilities into the workforce. This is accomplished by a qualitative review of the history of educational policies and programs used by England, France, Russia, China, Hong Kong, Kenya, and Nigeria. These strengths and weaknesses are compared with the history of policies implemented in the United States, to see what strategies can be used to affect policy changes that will better the chances for employment for those with learning disabilities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT	
Introduction .....	1
Purpose of the Project .....	2
Scope of the Project .....	2
Significance of the Project .....	2
Limitations of the Project .....	3
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Education in the United States .....	4
History of Education in the United States ...	4
17 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	5
18 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	6
Current Vocational Training .....	12
Economic Trends .....	16
Trends in Vocational Education .....	19
Academic Course Taking and Achievement .....	20
Summary .....	25
History of Special Education in the United States .....	26
16 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	27
17 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	27
18 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	28

19 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	30
20 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	31
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Introduction .....	44
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction .....	45
Europe and Asia .....	45
France .....	45
United Kingdom .....	50
Russia .....	54
China .....	58
Hong Kong .....	63
African Continent .....	66
Kenya .....	67
Nigeria.....	68
South Africa.....	69
Characteristics of Vocational Training for Those with Learning Disabilities in the United States .....	72
Proportion of Those with Learning Disabilities Enrolled in Vocational Programs .....	73
Current Testing for Learning Disabilities .....	75
Current Occupational Instruction for Those with Learning Disabilities .....	76

Current Training Programs for Those with Learning Disabilities .....	84
Convoluted Vocational Programs .....	84
Vocational Programs Rooted in Job Training .....	86
Job Corps .....	87
California Conservation Corps .....	87
Outcomes of Both Programs .....	89
Future Solutions .....	90
CHAPTER FIVE:	
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary .....	102
APPENDIX A:	
CURRENT TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES .....	105
Erie County English Pilot .....	106
Franklin County Learning Disabilities Pilot .....	106
Niagara Bridge Program Pilot .....	107
Oneida County Learning Disabilities Pilot ...	107
Oswego Industries Pilot .....	108
St. Lawrence County Sail-to-Success Pilot .....	108
Winchester Educational Learning Options Program for Employment Pilot .....	109

APPENDIX B:	
VISUAL AUDITORY KINESTHETIC	
AND TACTILE, PHONICS, SIGHT WORDS,	
AND WORD PATTERNS .....	110
REFERENCES .....	112



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

#### Introduction

One of the goals of education is to prepare students for employment by giving them the adequate skills they will need for the workforce. This is accomplished by various means: public, trade and vocational schools, colleges, and apprenticeships. Legislation in the United States has made higher test scores a priority, rather than competing in the global economy. This has left one group on the fringes of society, those with learning disabilities (LD). As this project will show, the United States has seriously lost sight of this goal.

Various efforts have been tried in transitioning students with LD to meaningful and gainful employment. The project will examine the various vocational and special educational programs of other countries, comparing their successes and failures with that of the United States to see what strategies can be successfully used. Doing so can save both time and money. The limitations are that the information on programs and outcomes in other countries

comes from many sources. The reliability and accuracy of the information is often not easily determined.

#### Purpose of the Project

From America's beginning, the Founding Fathers felt that public education should be based on economics, rather than philosophy, with the goal of creating a skilled workforce. For years this goal has been met. Now Americans are not as well-trained as those in other countries, especially those with learning disabilities (LD). To correct this, new policies must be devised and implemented.

#### Scope of the Project

The project will examine vocational programs in other countries, such as England, France, Russia, China, Hong Kong, Nigeria, and Kenya. A qualitative analysis is then made of strengths and weaknesses in comparison with the United States to see what strategies might be incorporated.

#### Significance of the Project

The research and interpretation of these results can be used in designing US policy, improving the transition of those with learning disabilities into the workforce. By interpreting the rationale behind successful vocational programs, American policymakers can design programs suited

to American culture to be used in a balanced and equitable manner.

#### Limitations of the Project

Not all of the literature is peer-reviewed, so some biases will be evident. For instance, Robert Osgood 2005) in his book "The History of Inclusion in the United States," gives an accurate account of America's efforts at mainstreaming those with disabilities into the regular classroom. Even though he compares both views for and against inclusion, his bias toward inclusion can be clearly seen in his comments. In addition, official websites by countries such as China and Hong Kong can be slanted in favor of their policies. This can limit the reliability and validity in interpreting information and what it means.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Education in the United States

##### History of Education in the United States

In looking over history, we see that monarchs mostly governed the world, and this reflected the goals set for education. Schools and universities were designed to keep people mindful of their place and to prepare them according to the vocations that were divinely placed on them. The world consisted mostly of stratified societies, with little freedom of upward social movement. It was this feudalistic concept that the Founding Fathers of the United States considered dangerous and fought against it right at its very roots, the human spirit. From the beginning, a debate was held as to how to loosen the European shackles that Americans had dragged with them across the Atlantic.

The United States stands out in world history because of its policy of "Manifest Destiny." It is America's duty to bring freedom and democracy to all peoples and nations of the world. Because of this policy the "United States has one of the most extensive and diverse education systems in the world. Education in the United States is notable

for the many goals it aspires to accomplish - promoting democracy, assimilation, nationalism, equality of opportunity, and personal development. Because Americans have historically insisted that their schools work toward these sometimes conflicting goals, education has often been the focus of social conflict" (United States, 1999, p. 28). One major difference is that with most industrialized nations education is centrally controlled and funded, but in the United States, each State is allowed to determine its educational policy and is largely responsible for its funding, with little subsidizing from the federal government. These diverse goals have benefited and plagued America's schools for more than 200 years, particularly in regards to special education.

17<sup>th</sup> Century. Benjamin Rush, a Founding Father of the United States, who was a physician, writer, educator, and humanitarian, in writing to the English nonconformist Richard Price, stated that the American Revolution was not over, "but it remains yet to affect a revolution of our principles, opinions, and manners, so as to accommodate them to the forms of government we have adopted. This is the more difficult part of the business of the patriots and legislators of our country. It requires more wisdom and

fortitude than to expel or to reduce the armies into captivity. I wish to see this idea inculcated by your pen" (Cremin, 1980, p. 1). Price's argument on reforming the American mind was to teach persons "how to think, not what to think." Price, with others, felt that only an educated citizenry could make the correct choice of democracy over tyranny. From humanism to moralism, these men forged an educational system that included not just schools, but churches, colleges, newspapers, and legislation. To them, this was not just an American crusade, but also a world crusade to give humankind the hope of liberty and freedom from feudalism, despotism, and corruption. Even their view toward science had the purpose of freeing humankind from the burdens of physical labor by means of improved agriculture, trade, industry, and medicine. With this new idealism in economics, politics, ethics, and foreign policy, other nations would witness the growth and success of the American experience and embrace the same values. It was believed that America was directed by God to "lead the way to a millennium of truth, knowledge, love, peace, and joy" (Cremin, 1980, p. 4).

18<sup>th</sup> Century. To initiate these noble ends, Thomas Jefferson's Bill for the More General Diffusion of

Knowledge (1779) allowed for federally funded free education, even if it was only for white children. This was to be offered to white immigrants with the intention of integrating them into American culture, thereby curtailing any mongrelizing of various cultures into the American experience. Yet, with the acquisition of Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Oregon, and California, came the citizens of France, Spain, Mexico, Britain, and Russia; along with their various cultures, religious beliefs, and their methods of instruction and learning. This inevitably led to an exchange of ideas and practices: England - the Sunday schools and Lyceum; Switzerland - child rearing and classroom instruction; Prussia - styles of schools and universities; and France - military tactics and training. While at the same time, Europe borrowed from the pedagogical experiments of Bronson Alcott, the American philosopher, teacher, reformer, and member of the New England Transcendentalist group. This changing influx of immigrants and ideas led to an innovative, but formless educational system, and unfortunately, by 1826, at the time of Jefferson's death, the Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge did not pass legislation. Instead, the districts and counties were responsible for the

education. Fortunately, Jefferson's hopes did not completely die with him. One noteworthy figure to take up the gauntlet was Horace Mann, an American education reformer and abolitionist.

Mann felt, as did Jefferson, that in order for the Republic to survive, there needed to be an educated populace and one practical way to accomplish this was by means of the Common School. This Common School should be open to all; all creeds, classes, and backgrounds; whether rich or poor, and would be funded by state taxes. While the debate as to funding was being argued, another debate was in progress, what to teach? Jefferson felt that "a useful American education" would consist of "the classics, mathematics, ethics, politics, civil history, zoology, anatomy, surgery, medicine, commerce, law, agriculture, modern languages such as French, Spanish, and Italian, natural history (including botany), natural philosophy (including chemistry), and every branch of science."

In asking John Adams for his opinion, Adams replied, "grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics, mathematics, cannot be neglected; classics, natural history, mechanics, philosophy, chemistry, geography, astronomy, history, and chronology" (Cremin, 1980, p.250). In comparing this



curriculum with Europe's, it can be seen that emphasis was directed toward practicality, rather than on philosophy. Noah Webster went so far as to advise for a revising of the spelling and pronunciation of English to make it easier to learn. American education was to be based on economic trends, that is, on the market needs in the way of a skilled and trained workforce, rather than simply preparing one for higher education. In the end, the marketplace determined the curriculum. As we will see later on, this philosophy still applies even today.

The colonial method for teaching a person to become a skilled artisan was a practice that had been in place for thousands of years, that is, apprenticeship. In European cities, such as Venice, artisans would organize themselves into guilds. It was by means of the guilds that arts and sciences were passed down. The guilds were made up of trades such as shoemakers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, printers, shipbuilders, tailors, and tanners. It was by means of these individual artisans and their shops that the needs of the colonies were met. If a person wanted a pair of shoes, the shoemaker would make a pair to perfectly match the customer's feet; a table could be made according to the exact specifications of the buyer; and a tailor

could measure an individual and make a garment that perfectly fit the customer.

When a family decided that one of their members was to learn a particular trade, an arrangement was made so that the child was to live and work with the master tradesman for a set number of years. During this time, room and board, and schooling was the responsibility of the master craftsman. After graduating as an apprentice, one became a journeyman, and after that a master craftsman. Even though this process took years, once graduated, one could perform every step in the process of producing a manufactured item. With shoes, it was the art of measuring the feet, tending the leather, cutting, forming, and sewing it to make the shoe. The shoemaker himself performed and completed all the needed steps, from start to finish.

It was only with the advent of the Industrial Revolution that this type of skilled labor was no longer needed, for with the factories came cheap labor and cheap goods. A person only needed to learn one specific skill, such as sewing or cutting, not the entire process of making the shoe. To supply this slightly trained and cheap labor, there needed to be a pliable workforce. This came in the form of child labor.

In colonial times child labor was not illegal. However, as years went by, child labor laws became stricter, which forced factory owners to find new ways to circumvent the laws. This could be done by building boarding houses and allowing whole families to live and work at the factories. The schooling was accomplished by putting schools on the factory grounds. After school, the children were put to work in the factories alongside their parents, whose job it was to supervise them. This seemingly charitable act on the part of the factory owners was by no means charitable. Far too many children lost life and limb on machines that were designed and built for adults to operate. Along with this injustice many of these children were blind, deaf, and had mental disorders. It was not until the movement for school reform in the 1800s that an effort was made to protect the rights of children.

In 1892 when Jacob Riis wrote *The Children of the Poor* and Joseph Manor Rice wrote *the Public School System of the United States*, both child labor laws and school reform became galvanized. This movement to save the children led to the establishment of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, the National Child Labor Committee, and the United States Children's Bureau (Cremin,

1988, p. 277). It was now illegal to employ children in sweatshop working conditions. With that came the lessening of hours and workdays, until the legal age of employment was 18. This finally stopped child labor in the United States, along with giving every child the right to a free education. The reasoning behind this was twofold; citizenry and the economy.

The hope of the Founding Fathers, such as Jefferson and Adams, was for an educated citizenry, which in its time was radical. What was even more radical was that education was to be based on a market driven economy. This was carried over into vocational education.

#### Current Vocational Training

After observing how different countries have used various methods to train and employ their disabled and non-disabled, the most common methods are vocational schools and apprenticeships, as in the case of France's apprenticeship System which lasts two to three years (Anderson, 1984), and Nigeria's Community-based Vocational Rehabilitation (CBVR) project (ALADE, 2004). After receiving a Certificate of Completion, they are considered employable by both the public and private sector. For those who are seriously disabled, after being trained, the

workshops will continue to be their place of employment. There is, of course, the unique approach taken in Nigeria, where persons are trained by local artisans and are then offered startup loans to begin their own businesses. In all these various methods used by various countries, both old and new, how does the United States rate in its success in training and employing the disabled and non-disabled?

In May of 2000, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational Adult Education brought together a group of community college administrators to determine the future of postsecondary education (PSOE). Within 15 minutes a consensus was reached. First, the mission of community colleges is to prepare their students for the work force. Second, that even though colleges attempt to prepare their students for entry-level work, they still neglect to take into consideration the changes in the American economy. Dr. Kotrlik (2001) confirms this by stating, "In brief, vocational education as a discipline is continually challenging to sort and resource its subject matter based on an external standard: mastering the skill sets will lead to a job." He gives the example of Computer Aided Design (CAD). To simply learn CAD is not enough (Jacobs, 2001, p. 1).

Different companies, such as General Motors and DiamlerChrysler, use a particular vendor-specific software package of CAD. This means that a college must maintain more than one set of this software. Because of the ever-changing technologies that drive manufacturing, the costs to keep up with those changes is making it more prohibitive for colleges to keep pace, which is why among community colleges vocational training is on the decline. Kotrlik recommends, "instead of attempting to articulate programs in broad disciplines, i.e. accounting, machining, etc., it might be more useful to structure relationships around the real careers within these specific industries found within the community" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 9).

This new partnership between business and education is referred to as the "new vocationalism" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 10). There are five approaches to this: tech-prep programs, work-based learning programs, articulated vocational education and applied baccalaureate degree programs, certificate programs for credit and non-credit, and contract and customized training programs. (1) Tech-prep programs involve a close collaboration with local businesses and their demands with students, (2) Work-based learning programs include apprenticeships, internships, and

corporate education, (3) Articulated vocational education and applied baccalaureate degree programs are simply programs that transfer one from a vocational program to a four-year university, (4) Certification for credit and non-credit programs are programs that require eighteen to twenty-four credit hours that deal with specific skills, (5) Contract and customized training programs are designed for local businesses and industries.

A survey taken by the U.S. Bureau of Census shows that the larger the company the more its employees become involved in school-to-work partnerships. On the low end, a company with between 20 to 49 employees is 23% involved in this type of partnership, whereas on the high end, a company with 250 or more employees is 45% involved in any school-to-work partnership program.

Deborah Catri(1998) states that vocational education is not, "mostly for high school kids who don't plan to go to college"(p.13). Vocational education (i.e., New Vocationalism) is for the new global economy. Yet according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000), vocational training is on the decline because of its inability to keep pace with technology and the changing dynamics of the American economy. This puts

American schools in a negative light, especially when France, China, Hong Kong, and even Nigeria are making strides in keeping pace with this New Vocationalism.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000) elaborates in detail all the aspects of vocational education in the US. The report goes over the economic trends that drive not only the market, but the various vocational programs; the skills that are needed to keep up with the market; what employers are looking for in employees; what are the most popular occupational programs; the characteristics of the student participation in vocational programs, and the graduation rates and successes. The report is divided into four topics, each of which details the American economy, where it is heading, and the efforts being made to adapt the workforce to this changing economy: 1. Economic Trends; 2. Trends in Vocational Education; and 3. Academic Course Taking & Achievement.

Economic Trends. After World War II, the United States became the world's major factory outlet. The United States became an industrial giant by supplying everything that the world had lacked during the war: new cars, stoves, refrigerators, radios, clothing, furniture, and even food.



Outside the U.S., most of the major nations were war-ravaged, with most of their factories destroyed. Today, all of this has changed, from America being a goods-producing nation to a service-producing nation.

By service-producing, we refer to services such as healthcare, advertising, computer and data processing services, private education, accounting, and recreation. Goods-producing simply entails manufactured goods both durable and nondurable. In 1945, the service industry accounted for only ten percent of employment, with thirty eight percent for manufacturing.

By 1996, there was a reversal: twenty-nine percent for servicing and fifteen percent for manufacturing. This change has caused mixed feelings; some believe that it is detrimental to the American worker while others feel that the "research shows that the services industry is very diverse and that the shift from manufacturing to services does not necessarily signal a deterioration in overall quality," that it is merely, "economic restructuring" (NCES, 2000, p. 19). This is certainly debatable since

there is \$1 trillion trade deficit between China and the United States.

What has brought about this economic restructuring? Alan Greenspan (1996) makes the assertion that it is technology. He states that this is a "once-in-a-century-event," along with a, "structural technological advance in information technology" (NCES, 2000, p. 20). This move has caused a switch from goods-based capital to human or knowledge-based capital, which includes industries such as telecommunications, computers, software, pharmaceuticals, education, and television. This accounts for more than half of the "total gross domestic product in the major industrialized economies, which accounts for 8 out of 10 new jobs" (NCSE, 2000, p. 22).

A projection made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 1991) ranks the list of service-oriented jobs and their educational requirements. Cashiers rank on the top with a projected growth of 530,000 jobs, with the second being systems analyst with a projected growth of 520,000 jobs. General Managers and top executives will grow by 465,000; registered nurses by 411,000. Out of the 10 occupations listed, three require a degree, the rest are on-the-job training. The BLS also estimated that more than half of the new jobs require some post-high school education, one third a bachelor's degree or more. There is

a definite shift toward higher education, which raises the question, where does this leave persons who have not fared well in the educational system, particularly those with learning disabilities?

The results can be seen by their unemployment rates in comparison with those who have fared well. Seventy nine percent of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher are employed, in comparison to 39% of those with less than a high school diploma.

Trends in Vocational Education. There has been a decline in student participation in vocational education from 1982 to 1994, from 98.2 percent to 97.2 percent. The reason for this is partly due to the importance that is now placed on higher graduation requirements, such as the increase of 21.6 to 24.2 credits for graduation. The NCES claims that this is in part due to the "increase in high school graduation requirements implemented by many states after the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983. As students have been required to take more academic coursework, they may have elected to take fewer vocational courses" (NCES, 2000, p. 49). While there was a twelve percent increase in academic credits there was a decrease in vocational credits from 4.7 to 4.0. 1994, credits earned

in vocational education curriculum fell to 16% of the total school credits (NCES, 2000, p. 49). Thus the percentage of those taking four or more vocational courses declined to 44 percent. This included Asian/Pacific Islanders, African-Americans, and Hispanics. The exception was the disabled. Between 1982 and 1994, graduates with disabilities increased their number of vocational credits by 25%, and by 1994 increased to 36%, while those without disabilities decreased by 9%. With the increased number of those with mild/moderate disabilities taking vocational courses, will they be able to handle the course work required? Their characteristics and success rates will answer this.

Academic Course Taking and Achievement. From 1982 to 1994, there was an increase in enrollment in vocational education, along with the basic core subjects that accompany it: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The percentage of graduates increased from 13% in 1982 to 50% in 1994. The statistics show that even though vocational students were less likely to meet the academic standards for college, they did meet the basic core standards. There was a threefold increase from 5% to 33% in twelve years (1982-1994); 40% met the science standard; 71% met the mathematics standard; 84% the social studies;

and 89% the English. This is encouraging since, in the last 15 years, the rigor of the course work has increased. This counters the image that only those with lower grades opt for vocational training, instead of college. The NCES, though, paints a negative picture stating that, "these initially low-achieving students are likely to complete less rigorous academic coursework during high school than their higher-achieving peers, thereby compounding their academic disadvantage and possibly widening the achievement gap" (NCES, 2000, p. 70).

It is true that vocational students take more lower-level math courses than college prep courses, the same with reading and science. Yet, instead of giving up, they direct their efforts toward what they believe they can "initially" handle academically, while directing the rest of their coursework toward vocational. Allowing them to set and fulfill their goals builds their self-esteem. Anastayia Lipnevich (2008) supported the notion that positive participation in adult education results from high self-esteem. This self esteem can be brought about by achieving even basic adult literacy. It was also observed that if they choose to obtain an associate's or bachelor's degree later on, they are successful. In fact, vocational

concentrators are more likely to obtain a degree or certificate within two years after graduating from high school.

Since some efforts are made on the part of these low-achievers to succeed, what have schools done to accommodate? To start with, they offer vocational programs with more challenging academic curriculum. In the NCES survey, about half of the high schools reported that they were integrating academic and vocational education, along with offering tech prep courses. Some made block changes, or accommodations that allowed more time for academic and vocational training. This is in addition to career majors, school-based enterprises, skills standards, skill or occupational certificates, and career academies.

To assist in this undertaking, ninety percent of high schools have their teachers attend conferences on combining academics and vocational curriculum. Schools in the Midwest and West offered tech prep programs, work experience and work-based learning programs, job shadowing, internships, and mentoring. Because of these programs 1 in 10 vocational students worked 20 or fewer hours per week, while 23% participated in work-based programs in comparison to the 3% of college prep students and the 6% of general

coursework students. Yet, despite this, there was a decrease from 17 to 13 percent of graduates completing career preparation and general work experience courses.

With a decline in vocational training, comes a decline of teachers to fill these positions. There is no real effort on the part of the Federal government or the States to standardize the qualifications for a vocational teacher and the educational standards vary greatly from State to State, and from vocation to vocation. About 8% of vocational teachers have less than a bachelor's degree; 47% have a bachelor's degree, and the rest (about 46 percent) have some type of advanced degree. Trade and industry, along with technical teachers, were more than likely to have an Associate's degree or above. Thirty-nine percent of trade and industry teachers had bachelor's degrees, 32% of "mixed" vocational teachers had degrees, and 16% of technical teachers held less than a bachelor's degree (NCES, 2000, p. 95). The reason given for the varying qualifications from State to State is that some States put experience in place of education, whereas others do not. That is why vocation has a higher number of older teachers; persons with years of experience in their field.

An image of American education begins to emerge; disjointedness. Different States, districts, and schools, all take a different approach when it comes to something as simple as school-based activities: 39% of schools use block schedules, 20% career majors, and 19% school-based enterprises, and the same is true of the standards for qualifying vocational teachers.

For Americans students, the only reason for attending school is to pass the Federal and State assessment tests and obtain a high school diploma. The only career choices encouraged are professional careers, which leaves very few options for those not planning on pursuing a professional career except for junior colleges, adult schools, and trade schools. The NCES showed that there was a general decline of high school students pursuing vocational education from 1982 to 1994.

The NCES reports that 55% of those graduating in 1992, only 12% received an Associate's degree or certificate of completion. The reason behind this low graduation rate is because many of these students are not equipped to take on remedial coursework. The survey continues, "Although taking up remedial coursework may slow students' progress toward a degree, students who take more remedial coursework may be



less likely to obtain a degree in the first place. Perhaps this plan exists because the students have lower educational aspirations or because they are more academically at risk." The survey concludes, "That there may be several reasons why Associate's degree holders complete more remedial coursework. Associate's degree programs have stricter academic prerequisites than certificate programs; alternatively, Associate's degree earners may complete more coursework overall than certificate earners" (NCES, 2000, p. 130). Even though it initially slows down the students' progress, it still affords them the needed opportunity to obtain their certificates or degrees. It is only initially that they are low achievers. However, are these graduates able to secure employment?

Summary. In summarizing the NCES report, we are forced to acknowledge some serious drawbacks with this country's educational system. First, there is no real cohesion between secondary schooling and the workforce. The report sums up the reason for this rather forcefully, "The percentage of public high school graduates taking at least one vocational education course decreased slightly. However, the decline in the percentage of graduates

completing a ' sequence' of related occupational courses was more dramatic. The reason given was more disturbing, "These decreases may be partly due to increases in high school graduation requirements implemented by many states after the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983" (NCES, 2000, p.184).

As students are required to take more academic coursework, they may elect to take fewer vocational courses. It seems that test taking is more important than preparing this nation's youth for employment. Because States' rights have taken priority over Federal, there is no uniform approach toward instruction, particularly regarding vocational instruction. This has had negative consequences on those with learning disabilities as to how they are to be transitioned into the workforce. Yet, there has been a slow process to change America's attitude toward special education and how to integrate into mainstream instruction.

#### History of Special Education in the United States

In looking at the history of Special Education in America, one will see a slow progress that at first seemed cruel and inhuman and totally against the principles as set forth in the U.S. Constitution, but were the prevailing

views of the time. It was by means of the philosophy of Enlightenment, and its application to the human psyche, that positive changes were possible, even when it pertained to the disabled.

16<sup>th</sup> Century. America traced its way of dealing with the disabled from its European roots. The attitudes toward the disabled were steeped in religious superstition; that one was either demonically possessed or cursed by God. Europe's solution was to intern these persons in asylums. One place was London's infamous St. Mary's of Bethlehem Hospital from where the term "Bedlam" comes from. This cloistering of the patients was so horrific and terrifying that many families, either out of love or out of shame for their disabled family member, hid them within the family. This was true since one could be accused of witchcraft, like the Salem witch-hunts of the 1600s.

17<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1752, America opened up its first "Bedlam" hospital, the Pennsylvania Hospital. The patients were placed in the basement where they were treated with the traditional methods of shackling, isolation, bloodletting, and enemas. The reason for bloodletting was to release the contaminating bile that was in the blood. As to the purpose behind enemas, one can only leave to the

imagination. Because of such "care," could anyone wonder why a family would go to great lengths to conceal a loved one? Finally, in 1773, Virginia opened its hospital in Williamsburg which took a more humane approach by relieving some of the suffering normally imposed in prisons and almshouses where many of the insane and idiots were housed. By the 1800s, all this started to change.

18<sup>th</sup> Century. As with Europe, America's path toward special education began with the blind and deaf. One famous American pioneer, with a university named after him, was Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. Another American was Samuel Gridley Howe who helped establish the Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind in 1832 and the Massachusetts Asylum for the Idiotic and Feeble-minded Youth in 1848. Their goal was to educate as well as to teach. One example of Howe's success was with Laura Bridgman. Laura Bridgman is referred to as the "Original Helen Keller."

Laura was two years old when she caught scarlet fever, which resulted in her becoming both deaf and blind, along with losing much of her sense of taste and smell. Her family was able to communicate with her through simple gestures for eating and sleeping. When Howe found out about Laura, she was seven years old. He advised the

family that with his help Laura would be able to communicate with words and not just simple gestures. Laura was allowed to go with Howe to his Perkins Institute. Under intense care, she was able to make amazing progress. By the time she was 12 she was able to do math, tell short stories, and study geography. Regrettably, not all of Howe's intentions were altruistic; part of his motivations centered on publicity for his institutions and programs, and his obsession with converting the disabled to Christianity.

This can be seen by the fact that when Laura began making her own choices with regards to her conception of God, interest and concern for Laura's progress began to diminish. Even though Howe continued to support Laura financially, he stopped giving her the needed moral and spiritual support that she so desperately needed. Because of this abandonment, she was never as happy as she was in the beginning (Ruark, 2001, pp.1-4). Still, one must attribute Howe to opening up the door for the disabled to pass through. He felt that the blind, deaf and dumb had the same rights to an education as any ordinary child. Because of this commitment, by the 1900s most states had at least one facility for the disabled. Sadly, the

humanitarian hopes of Gallaudet and Howe did not last long, and America returned to its policy of segregation, and went so far as to prohibit marriage among the "defective" (Osgood, 2002, p.21).

19<sup>th</sup> Century. By the 1900s, most states had some form of public school system. It was during this time that "defective" children began to find their way into the public schools. These early one-room classrooms could have a student-teacher ratio between 80:12 and 90:1. With the advent of a grading system based on age, a teacher could be able to track a student's progress. This led teachers to notice that some students were not the same as others either in their performance or behavior. With 80 to 90 students to a classroom, and with grades ranging from 1st to 6th, it was difficult, to say the least, to teach such a diversity of students. Having students with learning disabilities or emotionally disturbed only added to the stress. Because of this, it was felt that in order to better serve these students they should be placed into separate facilities where more attention could be given them. Part of the reason for this move was the insistence of the teachers to rid the classrooms of the disruptive and

feeble-minded. This led to the establishment of special schools just for the disabled.

The first formal school for deaf mutes was established in 1869, the Horace Mann School for the Deaf. In Rhode Island, the first public school for the mentally retarded was founded. Between 1898 and 1920, the growth of special classes for the mentally retarded began to open up in Springfield, Massachusetts, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, and Los Angeles.

20<sup>th</sup> Century. Even with the interest in the deaf, mute, and mentally retarded, the policy of segregation still held. According to psychologist E. Wallis Wallin, mentally disabled students "retarded the rate of progress of the entire class and which often constitutes an irritant to the teacher and other pupils" (Osgood, 2005, pp, 27-28). It was not until the 1930s that a change began to take place.

In 1930, Stanley Davies wrote *Social Control of the Mentally Deficit*. Davies predicted that if measures were not taken to ensure a proper education for the mentally disabled, society would pay "for this either by supporting these persons for the rest of their lives in institutions, or more likely in a larger bill for crime, the latency,

pauperism, and social degradation" (Osgood, 2005, p. 36).

Even though Davies' predictions made sense, no efforts were made during the 1930s.

The Depression of the 1930s limited funding for the educating and transitioning of the disabled into the labor force. Efforts were mostly directed toward those hardest hit by the Depression, the American worker. When World War II began to loom on the horizon, American industry began to take a turn for the better by supplying its allies with armaments. With this surge in national income, happier days seemed to be in sight. Still, as with England, every now and then it takes something totally unrelated in one area to bring about change in another. With England's work force being drained during the war, and with so many being inducted into the armed forces, a labor shortage occurred which demanded a workforce from otherwise ignored sources, women for instance. The disabled were also drafted into this new workforce. Soon it became apparent that these individuals could successfully perform the duties originally held by those who were now in the armed forces.

In 1950, the 49th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) found that 10-12% of American children required special services. Because of a 47%



increase of children with disabilities in regular schools, there was a debate as to segregation or inclusion. On the side of inclusion was the notion that teachers were trained to lend assistance when necessary. This would avoid the problem of simply dumping children into a regular classroom, allowing them to either sink or swim. Yet, on the opposite side, those who supported segregation felt that it provided a safer and more supportive environment.

Harley Z. Wooden, superintendent of the Michigan School for the Deaf, stated that placing "a child in a normal environment may lead to disastrous educational retardation and emotional and social maladjustment, for the simple reason that just the physical presence with a normal group is no guarantee of success." In fact, it often results in "impossible intellectual competition and social isolation" (Osgood, 2005, p. 50). In 1956 Arthur S. Hill, educational director of the United Cerebral Palsy, made the observation that, "In too many instances ... our leaders in education continue to ignore the reality of learning differences and refuse to consider the obvious needs for differentiated school services .... It is time to discard platitudes and speak in realistic terms. Exceptional children are much like other children, but educationally

they present specific problems of learning and physical adaptation. If it were not so, there would be no need for differentiated educational services" (Osgood, 2005, p. 52). Nevertheless, this advice was bypassed because of a major event in US history that shaped policy for the disabled and minorities; the Civil Rights Movement.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), the landmark decision concerning segregation, affected both minorities and disabled alike. In 1959, Congress passed PL 85-905, which authorized loans for captioned films for the deaf and PL 85-926 which gave federal support for training special education teachers (Public Education, 2007, p. 6). Still, it takes a tragedy to hit home before politicians become aware of those with learning disabilities, as was the case with President Kennedy. His sister Rosemary was diagnosed as mentally retarded. This affected not only the President, but also his sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who urged her brother to appoint the Panel on Mental Retardation for a study and report on a national approach to preventing and managing mental retardation. After the report, Congress passed PL 88-156 and PL 88-164, which supported the States by expanded training, research, and additional programs in the area of special education.

The research began to prove that some learning disabilities are a result of neurological damage. This was widely disclaimed at first, but soon began to gain acceptance because of Alfred Strauss and Heinz Warner (Osgood, 2005). Strauss and Warner, along with other researchers, found that in some cases brain injury resulted in damage not only to the brain, but also to the nervous system, which manifested itself in poor school performance and/or behavioral problems. The question now was how to deal with these problems; through segregation or integration?

In the 1960s, various studies were conducted on this subject and the results were conflicting and inconclusive. Nevertheless, this did not stop Lloyd Duma (1968) from publishing his "Special Education for the Mildly Retarded - Is Much of it Justified?" Even though he supported segregated education in the beginning, he began to doubt its efficacy. He gave examples of children who, considered retarded, simply lacked a proper education because of their low status background. The reason for this lack of proper education was that teachers and administration were concerned about their job security, so they kept their programs in place.

Another study dealt with the labeling of those with learning disabilities. Some felt that placing a label on a person destroys one's identity as an individual. Stephen Lilly went so far as to say, "Special classes should be discontinued immediately for all but the severely impaired" (Osgood, 2005, p. 91). This resulted in the further passing of legislation designed to protect the rights of those with learning disabilities.

Because the injured and disabled soldiers returning from Vietnam were having difficulty returning to mainstream society, Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This piece of legislation guaranteed the civil rights for any disabled person working for a federally funded institution or program. It also made it mandatory for builders and contractors to make buildings accessible to the disabled. This movement toward righting the wrongs committed against the disabled resulted in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) PL 94-142. It guaranteed children with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate education; protecting the rights of both children and parents; helping state and local education agencies; and ensuring the effectiveness of the education being provided. To facilitate these goals an individual

education program (IEP) was written for each child, which spelled out the present levels of performance, the annual goals and objectives, the services to be provided, how long those services were to be provided, and scheduled assessments and reviews as to the student's progress. In 1986, PL 99-457 included infants and toddlers below age 2.

With the term "least restrictive," came the new buzzword "mainstreaming." The Research Bulletin Number 11, 1993, from Phi Delta Kappa's Center for Evaluation, Development, and Research defines mainstreaming as referring:

"to the selective placement of special education students in one or more "regular" education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must earn his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to keep up with the work assigned by the regular classroom teacher. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery" (Rogers, 1993, p.1).

Some educators took a different approach. Susan and William Stainback recommended the total dismantling of the "dual system" of regular and special education and merging

it into one entity (Collins, 2003). It was not only educators who wanted to restructure Special Education, but others with political clout also favored the idea.

One such person was both a politician and a parent, Madeleine Will, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in the US Department of Education, under the Reagan administration (Osgood, 2005). Will's reasons were not only political, but also personal; her son Jon was mentally retarded. Will wanted her son to live an active and independent life as an adult. To her, this could only be accomplished by exposing him to real-life situations and one place to start was school. School meant not just book learning, but social learning as well. This meant that both special and regular education must be combined into one entity. This would eliminate the barrier between the two.

To support this view, Douglas Biklan, in his writing "Achieving the Complete School for Effective Mainstreaming" (1985), compared the segregation of Special Education students to that of slavery. This infuriated opponents of inclusion, and the lightning rod that fused all the divisiveness between these opposing camps was the Regular Education Initiative (REI). Put simply, the goal of REI is

to take all special and regular education programs and

one general educational program. All

teachers would be working in regular

is consider this proposal unrealistic.

idle" students in a regular classroom

teachers under enormous responsibility,

expectations and stress of those with

les to perform to the same standards

lar classroom. Those students would

for a fall" (Osgood, 2005, p. 156). What

asoline on the fire were the comments made

by James Kaufman. He accused Madeleine Will of being used

by the Reagan-Bush administration to dismantle the programs

that were intended for the disabled in order to reduce

federal spending on special programs. Eventually, the

debate not only became more heated, but became personal

between those involved.

In 1990, PL 94-142 was reauthorized as the Individuals

with Disabilities Act (IDEA). IDEA expanded services to

children with brain injuries and autism, and in 1997, IDEA

included children with violent and dangerous behaviors. It

also redefined a "free and appropriate education." If the

appropriate education offered was not the best, then school

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districts were still obligated to provide the best suitable environment for learning, even if it meant putting a disabled student in a regular classroom. With pressure being put on school districts, mainstreaming and inclusion were to become the primary avenue for accomplishing the goals set out in IDEA and REI. The problem was that there were different definitions for mainstreaming and inclusion. Stinson and Foster state that, "the difference between mainstreaming and inclusion is that mainstreaming implies that the child will adapt to the regular classroom, whereas inclusion implies that the regular classroom will adapt to the child" (Osgood, 2005, p. 182). These opposing methods of instruction led to harsh disagreements as to the effectiveness of inclusion versus segregation.

The argument that Osgood makes for inclusion is that segregation, in itself, stigmatizes, degrades, and is emotionally devastating to a child. Integration, on the other hand, creates multiple, necessary, and effective opportunities for the socialization and education of the disabled among their non-disabled peers, which will eliminate ignorance and prejudice.

John Osgood continues his support for inclusion by stating that "all children have the right to be in a



regular classroom," and that, "it is our responsibility as educators to do whatever we can to make sure that occurs to the maximum extent whenever possible" (Osgood, 2005, p. 196).

What if no parent wishes to have his or her child placed in a regular classroom? These children still have the right to attend any other educational alternative. Nevertheless, Osgood concludes his book *The History of Inclusion in the United States* by maintaining that, "inclusion as an ideal, a process, and a goal that represents the right to an education they need, and deserve; that in itself justifies its continued attention and support."

To intensify this debate, No Child Left Behind 2001 (NCLB) was legislated. Even though NCLB upholds the mandates of desegregation as set forth in IDEA, it goes a step further; every student, regardless of their disability, is held accountable to the same academic standards. To prepare students to meet those standards, school districts have put in place alternative programs such as tutoring. Unfortunately, it is the mildly disabled, which comprise 90% of the overall special-education population that show any signs of improvement.

Strong and passionate words have been exchanged concerning inclusion versus segregation, with both sides feeling justified. Those on the side of inclusion justify their position because it is the ideal and moral thing to do. The segregationists maintain their stance in that it is the practical approach. What is the correct answer?

Idealism is fine, if it is practical. Unfortunately, being an idealist and a pragmatist at the same time is difficult, and what we experience throughout our lives, along with our wants and needs, shape our views and opinions. Madeleine Will made this evident in her efforts to influence government policy because of her mentally retarded son Jon. She "wanted him to become an adult who would know himself well enough to understand his own needs and assume responsibility to the greatest extent possible for his own happiness. In order to do so, emphasis on making and maintaining friends would grow more pronounced in the adolescent years" (Osgood, 2005, p. 144). Will's approach to this is to eliminate the barriers between special and regular education. Osgood is far more deliberate in his support in inclusion in that it is "the ideal itself that justifies its continued attention and support" (Osgood, 2005, p. 200)

Whether inclusion or segregation, what is lost in all this wrangling is what to do with these students after they graduate from high school, what has really been done to prepare them for the workforce? As already observed, China sets aside special workshops just for the handicapped; which ensures them of continued employment that is best matched to their abilities. China's cultural and political position is one of community, where individuality is second-place. On the opposite end, American's policies and culture condemns such actions and considers the rights of the few to outweigh the rights of the many; individuality is hailed as the cornerstone of democracy and freedom. There are pluses and minuses to both approaches. With America's approach comes high individuality and unemployment among the handicapped; whereas, China's method brings about more employment with less individuality.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

An extensive examination has been done of the educational policies and programs from England, France, Russia, China, Hong Kong, Kenya, and Nigeria which are aimed at transitioning those with learning disabilities into the workforce. It has been researched as to how each country's educational system is in line with its political philosophy, and in which ways the culture is embedded into the learning process. Finally, the various ways that the global economy has become the driving force behind the decision-making process of what curriculum is to be taught.

These results are used to come up with various strategies to make available more efficient transitional programs. This information was obtained from numerous sources: public library, Internet, interviews, and school site.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The literature review details the history of the American educational system, how it was established with the intention of educating a workforce that fulfills the needs of the economy. This has been the goal for almost 200 years. Africa, Asia, and Europe have similar goals, but there are major differences in how they achieve them.

#### Europe and Asia

France. France's educational system began with the establishment of its universities in the Middle Ages. After the French Revolution, Napoleon, between 1806 and 1808, established a centralized school administration that has continued down to this day. In 1881 and 1886, under Julien Ferry, laws were established that open the way for a free and compulsory education from primary to secondary; all of this under strict government control. Even though this centralization of education may be frowned upon in the United States, "virtually the entire adult population of France is literate" (France, 1999, pp. 6-7). According to Anderson, "the postwar development of vocational education

and training in France has been a remarkable achievement" (Anderson, 1984, p. 3).

Before this, France's vocational training was under the supervision of the various guilds. After the French Revolution the new government abolished the guilds and apprenticeships declined. Conditions only worsened with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, where the need for specialized skills lessened. With this new economy came new careers and the need to train persons in these careers. This was accomplished by government supervised vocational education. World War I brought a shortage in the labor force. To fill this need the Astior Law was passed in 1918, which combined both vocational and basic general education together, where in three years a person could obtain a Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP).

Fifty-eight years later in 1975 the Education Law was passed, which allowed for young people from ages 11 to 14 to prepare for vocational training. The student has a choice between the three-year course Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP), the two-year course Brevet d'Enseignement Professionnelle (BEP) or the Apprentice System. BEP courses specialize in a particular trade or industry, or any broad technical background, such as the

hotel or catering trade. CAP courses train in sub-skills such as laundry and catering. The Apprentice System is more hands-on, with the apprentice becoming indentured between 15 to 16 years old. The apprenticeship lasts two to three years, during which time the employer provides both training and wages, while the apprentice agrees to work under the employer for the stated period. An employer with 10 or more employees is subject to the 5% Apprentice Tax, which supplies partial funding for the program, with the government supplying the rest. With this success in vocational education, how does France deal with its disabled population?

In the 18th-century the French took John Locke's notion that man's thoughts were not empirical, innate, but that he was born "tabula rasa," an empty slate, and one learns through the senses not just through instinct. This new enlightened concept meant that disabilities could be overcome by coaching and training. A blind person, for instance, could learn shapes and forms by means of touch. This was confirmed by the fact that when allowed to interact, the deaf community was able to develop a sign language on its own. Though simple in nature, it allowed for communication and interaction. This led the French

priest Michael Charles de l'Epee (1712-1789) to also use signs to signify words and meanings to communicate with the deaf.

While attention was given to the deaf and blind, there is little evidence that this was given to the mentally disabled. As previously mentioned, the only care set aside for them were the asylums. Even though compulsory education was introduced in France in 1882, persons with learning disabilities were still segregated from regular student population. The Declaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen of 1789 held the idea, "Equality in the eyes of the law;" yet, as in the United States prior to the civil rights movement, the policy of "separate but equal" was in place. It was referred to as "positive discrimination," and support could best be served in groups, rather than individually. Then, in 1909, a law was passed where special education classes could be annexed to school sites, but still separated from the rest of the regular students. Referred to as classes de perfectionnement or "improvement classes," children from the ages 6 to 14 were admitted. It was not until 1975 that it was decided to integrate the students into the regular classroom.



Despite the passing of the Loi d'Orientation en Faveur des Personnes Handicapees (legislative policy in support of handicapped people) in 1975 and the Jospin Law in 1989 to finance and implement the mainstreaming of special needs students into the regular classroom, no positive efforts were made to dismantle the complex system of schools and institutions for the disabled (Belanger, 2001, p. 342). It was so much easier to continue to categorize, compartmentalize, and segregate.

In January 2004, the government passed a bill in an attempt to improve previous legislation dealing with the disabled. This was, in part, because of the high unemployment rate among the disabled. The bill's primary purpose was to provide the necessary assistance for sustainable employment. Under this bill, individuals were guaranteed equal treatment along with an 80% disability benefit package. There was also a provision for continued education from kindergarten to adulthood, with particular attention toward vocational training. Unfortunately, reactions to the bill by the National Disabled Person's Advisory Council were mostly negative. It was felt that the bill did not go far enough. The disability allowance was only half of the minimum wage, which was not enough to

live on. There was also the question as to what was meant by equal treatment for the disabled (Jolivet, 2004, pp. 1-5)

United Kingdom. Britain's educational system is made up of local educational authorities (LEAs) and the Ministry of Education. Even though education is compulsory up to secondary as in the United States, pupils are segregated into higher or lower levels according to their abilities. Another difference is that the government funds British schools, with LEAs providing additional funds. Even though there are numerous controversies over a national curriculum, the government still holds sway as to what and how to teach in England and Wales. In Scotland, there is a referendum to allow schools to be self-governing. While some students go to private boarding schools such as Eaton College and Winchester School, most attend State (public) schools.

After graduating, students receive a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). While higher education is available, one third of graduates opt out for lower-level jobs. The others choose to stay in school to go to either vocational training, or a college or university ("United Kingdom," 1999, p. 4). Many in the

United Kingdom would like to have the same success seen in France, but without the centralized control. Britain's educational system, as with United States, is more autonomous. Yet, in order to compete in the global market, some feel this needs to change. Even though both countries have general education and vocational training systems, France has 40% of its youth enrolled in full-time vocational training, in contrast to the UK's, 10%. France has a 19% unemployment rate in contrast to Britain's 44%.

Part of the reason for France's success is that the central government oversees its vocational programs, while in the UK most of the control is held by the private sector, comprised of employer associations and trade unions. Another difference is that "apprenticeship programs in France have the force of law; in the UK they have only the guidance of the voluntary Employer-trade Union Joint Board" (Anderson, 1984, p. 4). There is one other difference, one that has the potential for avarice and fraud, government funding. Career counselors have demonstrated signs of bias toward certain occupations in which they have a vested interest. Because of this, many in Britain are considering a more unidirectional control by the government, which is contrary to traditional politics.

Still, in its efforts to prepare its youth for the workforce, how does the United Kingdom attend to the needs of those with learning disabilities?

In the beginning, the United Kingdom took the same path as the United States; implementing Charity schools, which were far from charitable. Charity schools were a combination of factory, school, Chapel, and workhouses. The children lived in the workhouses and were taught basic academic studies, such as: reading, writing, and math, along with religious instruction. The rest of the time was spent working long hours in grueling factory conditions. This was referred to as on-the-job training. Since labor laws were not in effect at that time, children could work 8 to 14 hours a day, six days a week. Because many of the machines were not designed for small children to operate, many of them lost limbs, or even died. It was only later in the century that child labor laws began to take effect and this form of child abuse was finally stopped. Along with these positive social changes, other changes were to come along that would help change the lives of the handicapped, changes that occurred during World War II.

Since Germany was bombing the inner cities, it was necessary to evacuate the schools to the suburbs. This

included most of the special schools for the disabled. When the evacuees were returned, many of the disabled had to be placed in regular schools, since there was no room for them elsewhere. The results were surprising. Being allowed to interact with regular students, these disabled students, after graduating from school, became productive members of society (Armstrong, 2002). During this time, the 1944 Education Act was passed, and even though its provisions did not include those with learning disabilities, it did prepare the way for the 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act which recognized and tried to correct the wrongs inflicted on the disabled. Western Europe, in time, also overcame many of its prejudices toward the disabled. Eastern Europe and Asia were a different matter.

The United Kingdom continued to pass legislation for the improvement and treatment of the disabled. In the 1970s, the Education (Handicapped Children) Act made education universal. Next came the 1981 Education Act, mainstreaming disabled children were into the regular classroom. Finally, in 2001, the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA) was legislated. This act defends the right of the disabled to fair and equal

education and training. This means that if a person is dyslexic or deaf, accommodations must be made for their disability. This can be in the way of interpreters, delivery of materials or instruction, or in the physical features of a building (United Kingdom, 1999, p. 26).

Russia. Russia's present-day educational system is still largely based on the Soviet approach of centralized State control, although there has been a significant effort to decentralize. With the downfall of the czarist monarchy in 1918 and the subsequent birth of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) came a tight centrally controlled public school system (private schools were prohibited) where academics and indoctrination of the communist ideology replaced the more liberal curriculum before the Bolshevik Revolution, the result being 99% of the populace were now literate. The downside of this centralized approach was large, but few, schools. Because of the small number of schools and the lack of space, one third of students have to attend in shifts. Along with this disparity, there is the physical enormity of the facilities and the task of maintaining them. Many now lack the basic amenities, such as heating and plumbing. In order to address these concerns, many of these schools have to look

to outside sources to sponsor them. In its effort to improve the educational quality of its schools, what steps has Russia made to address the needs of its disabled?

Russia is the home of the famous developmental psychologist L.S. Vygotsky (1896-1934). Yet, it took years for Russia to employ his philosophy that children are active learners. He saw language as the primary means of instruction in the classroom, and that teachers should encourage their students to form and articulate their thoughts and ideas, so that there is a continual interaction between teacher and students, and what the students learn acts as a foundation for the teacher to "scaffold" additional learning. This humane approach of viewing children as individuals, not as automatons, caused Vygotsky to stand out from his peers. In the 1800s, Russia began its emphasis on the blind and deaf. Many state-sponsored schools were established throughout the country, and by the second half of the 19th-century Russia was the leader in understanding and addressing the educational needs of those with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, this came to a crawl right after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1918. The wave of the first twenty years of the revolution left the disabled in its wake. Because the new

state was limited in its financial resources, there simply was not enough money to build more schools (Malofeev, 1998, p. 181).

Along with the lack of funding there was the ideology of a utopian communist society; there would be a decline in the physical and mental ailments that are so common in capitalist society. By the 1930s, there was a censorship on the number of children needing special education. To hide the fact that communism had its share of those with learning disabilities, it set up state-sponsored boarding schools in large cities, which meant separation from the family months at a time. This had a devastating effect on both the children and their families. During this time, assistance was focused on the organic and biological, rather than on Vygotsky's approach of interaction with the surrounding environment (Malofeev, 1998, p. 182). By the 1980s, the separation of the "normal" children from the "abnormal" children reached a peak, where they were no longer allowed to play or work together. This separation extended even into adulthood. State policy was such that the "abnormal" were assigned to work only in designated workplaces (Korkunov, 1998, p. 187).



With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 came a more open approach in dealing with special education. This led to a working partnership between two Russian and American universities; Urals State Pedagogical University (USPU) and Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). The purpose behind this partnership is to assist Russia in leaving behind the old Soviet Union centralized system of boarding schools and replace it with a more democratic and child centered system. This means that each region has more control over its methods and resources of instruction. Each district would be able to choose from a multitude of curriculum that would be best suited for the needs of their students; the "one fits all" would no longer be State policy. The school in Ekaterinburg is taking this more liberal approach by allowing the integration of mildly disabled students into the regular classrooms. Even though this may be commonplace in the United States, it is a radical step for Russia, since much of the 70-year-old centralized communist system is still in place, and the training of special education teachers continues to take a uniform approach, ignoring the complexities of those with learning disabilities. It has been suggested by educators that even though Russia does not need to copy the United

States, there should still be a more liberal and humane approach (Korkunov, 1998).

China. China lays claim to a long and rich cultural history steeped in learning, with the first university established in 124 B.C.. Unfortunately, few Chinese were able to be a part of this history. Up to 1949, only 20% of the population was literate. Since the takeover of the Chinese Communist Party, that number has risen to 81.5%. This is due to an enormous movement on the part of the Communist Party to educate more than 60 million peasants in "winter schools," which were in session during the winter months when farmers had free time. The goal was for an educated populace, thereby reducing class distinction between manual and menial labor; the factory worker and the farmer. With China's recent goal to enlarge and modernize its economy, importance has been placed on "theoretical and firmer skills, than on political attitudes and the spirit of the revolution" (Yang, 1999, p. 24). Between 1996 and 1997, 136.2 million Chinese were enrolled in primary schools, 69.2 million in secondary, and 5.8 million in schools of higher learning.

It is this centralization and unity of purpose to modernize its economy that has made vocational education

the key to China's prosperous economy, which is now one of the leading industrial powers of the 21st-century. As with America's decision to have education guided by market demands, so too has China. While this approach can have some practical advantages, at the same time it can prove disastrous if market trends are not accurately predicted. This can lead to preparations in areas not needed, leading to unemployment. China has made the bold move to establish "a new model in which government is the primary support, while taking active measures to encourage business institutions and social groups to participate in supporting vocational education. It is local government's responsibility to manage vocational education" (Yanping 1986, pp. 13-14).

It is still the government's role to tightly control the curriculum, so much so that school principals have no real power, but merely acting as managers, playing no role in hiring and firing of staff, evaluations, or in curriculum. The result is "the schools offer a rich and balanced curriculum which meets the demands of employers worldwide for a second foundation in core skills" (Lumby, 1998, p. 6).

Because of China's more open door policy, many university students have decided to pay for their tuition and seek higher paying jobs, rather than having the state pay and being assigned to lower paying state positions. Yet, in its efforts to improve the living standards of its citizens, how has China included its disabled in this endeavor?

To answer this, one must understand China's educational philosophy and its underlying cultural influences. One major influence is the Confucian ideology of temperance and restraint of negative emotions. Confucius placed people into three personality characteristics, with their educational needs based on those characteristics. For instance, "A student Qui is timid, we should encourage him; while student Yi is aggressive, so discouragement is needed" (Clark, 2005, p. 273). Other Chinese philosophers, such as Sun Zip and Mencius, taught that external influences affect human nature. Finally, there is the philosophy of deep-seated devotion towards one's elders and the community rather than to one's self, where individuality is looked down on; the exact opposite of Vygotsky's view nurturing the individuality of children.

Like Europe and the United States, China also established schools for the blind and deaf in the late 1800s, but it was not compulsory for children to attend. During World War II, unlike England, opportunities did not open up for those with learning disabilities. Instead, interests in the disabled were set aside. Due to the Japanese occupation and the atrocities that were being committed, the matter of survival was on most people's minds. After the war and the establishment of the Communist Peoples Republic of China came the Cultural Revolution and, along with it, the belief of a communist utopia. As in the Soviet Union, there came the state censorship of how many were diagnosed with learning disabilities. In fact, according to a 1968 National Survey on the Status of Disabilities (NSDD), only 55% of the 6 million school-age children with learning disabilities received any special services and less than 1% were enrolled in special schools (Clark, 2005). Only recently has the notion of equal rights toward the disabled been recognized, especially with the passage of the Law of the Peoples Republic of China on the Protection of Disabled Persons in 1990. In arriving at the 20th century, great strides have been made in Special Education, while at the

same time long-held bigotries still influence government policy.

Of the countries examined so far, China stands out in its attempts to change its past policies by legitimizing the rights of the disabled. On July 21, 1994, the Ministry of Education made it compulsory for those who are blind, deaf, and mildly retarded to be enrolled in regular school, with no more than three per classroom. On May 9, 1996 the Ninth Five Year Plan (1996-2001) was passed. The target was that 80% of disabled children would be enrolled in school, along with a program to train teachers in the field of Special Education to meet that target. Along with academic instruction, there was vocational instruction. This not only included the mildly retarded, but all those with various disabilities, including autism. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2001-2005) made schools accountable for these goals by making it illegal to refuse enrollment based on disability (Clark, 2005).

Even though improvements have been made in primary and secondary education, accommodations in higher learning are limited only to the visually impaired. Vocational opportunities are chosen according to the disability, such as music and physical therapy for the blind and arts for

the deaf. There are efforts to employ the disabled by means of workshops, which are subsidized by the government. The family still provides most of the financial support. Because of culture and tradition, many parents are still reluctant to send their children to school since they feel that it is their responsibility to care for family members and that assistance from the state is not adequate. To overcome this bias, the government has made May 3rd, the National Day for People with Disabilities, to raise awareness of the possibilities open for training and rehabilitation. This is an enormous step on the part of the Chinese, since only 60 years ago China's educational system was largely patterned after the Soviet Union.

Hong Kong. Hong Kong helps illustrate the cultural challenges faced when East meets West. As with China, tradition dictates that one's life is dedicated to the family and community. Society is stratified, with parents and elders on the top layer, and others making up the rest of the layers. There is no concept of individuality as there is in the West. Along with this challenge, there are the remnants of colonialism, with the Elitists, or rich, on the top; mainstream in the middle; and Special Education at the bottom.

As with China, Hong Kong's vocational training is also centrally controlled. The Manpower Development Committee (MDC) coordinates, regulates, and advises the government as to its labor needs, and how to dispense school funds. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) establishes and operates various vocational colleges and schools (Hong Kong, 2008). The training includes such vocations as craftsmen, technicians, and technologists for industry, commerce, and services. These courses offered diplomas and certificates in Vocational Studies, which allows the student to pursue higher education if they wish. In 2006/07, thirty-five thousand full-time students were enrolled in nearly 26,000 courses. For those with disabilities the VTC has three Skills Centers with over 600 full-time training places, about 100 being residential facilities (Hong Kong; The Facts, 2008).

As already noted by Wong and Peason, there is a resistance to the integration of the mentally disabled in both the general education sector, and in the school-to-the work sector, and VTC only offers training placement to those who pass a work assessment test. If they do not pass, the only work opportunities available are in sheltered workshops, similar to those in the People's



Republic of China. Eria Ping found that these workshops were not geared to Hong Kong's economy. That is why it has been suggested that there be more collaboration between business and industry, and the mentally handicapped community. In interviewing teachers about their thoughts and concerns toward the inclusion of disabled students in a classroom, it is enlightening as to the similarities faced by those in Hong Kong with those faced in the United States.

One of the concerns is the mainstreaming of special needs students without support for the regular teachers. In one interview a teacher states, "He has zero receptiveness in class, just sitting there during exams, and very slow in copying notes. He sucks his thumb and spits at others, even calls the teacher names. He pushed the tables and made loud noises in class" (Wong, 2004, p. 269). Another concern deals with what is felt as an injustice to both special and regular education students. Some feel that disabled students are not receiving the extra needed help being in a regular classroom and that the additional time spent with them could be spent more efficiently on the other students. There is also the matter of salary. Regular teachers who have disabled

students in their classroom feel that they should be paid in addition to their regular salary because of the extra duties they must perform. It is observed that most Hong Kong teachers are "at best ambivalent and at worst negative about integration ...." and that "It is too much to expect the individual teacher to resolve two competing philosophies (Asian and Western) in the classroom" (Wong, 2004, p. 276).

#### African Continent

In another part of the world, Africa, similar problems are confronted. Africa is the second-largest and second most populous continent in the world. It covers 6% of the Earth's total surface, 20.4% of the total land area, and 14% of the world's population. Certain parts of Africa are still remote. Yet, despite its remoteness, numerous nations and empires, from Egypt to England, spanning thousands of years, have invaded Africa. The last invaders took the form of colonialists. After colonialism, Africa has been plagued by instability, poverty, and violence. Today, Africa is composed of 53 nations (Africa, 2007, p. 1).

Kenya. Kenya is in East Africa and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. It gained its independence in

1963 and became a republic in 1964, with its educational system set in place by 1980. School consists of eight years of primary, four years of secondary, and four years of higher education. School is not compulsory and is free except for uniforms, books, and supplies. Eighty five percent attend the first five years, with 78% of the adult population being literate (Maxon, 1999, p. 6). Included in this educational system is Special Education. As in other countries, there are competing interests and limited resources. Jacqueline Muuya, a professor at the University of Reading, United Kingdom, reveals that there is a lack of effort on the part of the African countries to plan and implement national programs directed toward the disabled. Kenya is an exception, by the fact that it has placed high aims for meeting the academic and vocational needs of its disabled as a part of its national agenda. Muuya quotes Kianaji, stating that in 1987 there were 54 special education schools; by 1998 the number had increased to 110. Statistics also show that there is an average student-to-teacher ratio of 8:1. Yet, with all this emphasis on education, little is placed on vocation. A survey was given to administrators and teachers, where academic progress was ranked as a high priority, and vocational

training being ranked as low (Muuya, 2002, p. 238). The rationale behind this is centered on African social culture and values. Similar to China, it is the family's responsibility to care for its members.

Nigeria. Nigeria's approach is different. Instead of using the centralized approach, the government has availed itself of the help of the United Nations to form the Community-based Vocational Rehabilitation (CBVR) project. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), there are 12 million disabled persons in Nigeria. The project's goal is to train the disabled in various trades, and then finance them into establishing their own privately owned businesses. This was set up in indifference to the six large-scale residential vocational rehabilitation centers scattered throughout the country, where most of the skills learned could not be taken outside the centers, and did not allow for the integration of the disabled into the community. CBVR's program is not a novel one, but is the age-old apprentice method, the only difference being that the government finances the local artisans to sponsor an apprentice and then financially backs the graduates to set up their own shops.

Various candidates are interviewed to see if they have the potential to learn and succeed. If accepted, the training lasts approximately a year, with room and board being provided by the training artisan. After graduating, the trainees are offered a start up loan to help them buy equipment and supplies. Those who are unable to qualify for the loan remain with their trainers and work for a specified salary. Among the vocations offered are animal husbandry, typing and shorthand, catering, shoemaking, cloth weaving, radio and television repair, woodcarving, tailoring, hairdressing, decorating and painting, motorcycle repair, goldsmithing, barbering, and blacksmithing. The sample project only involved 155 people; yet, it had a 90% success rate (Alade, 2004, pp. 143-148).

South Africa. South Africa is located at the tip of the African continent. Because of immigration, South Africa is very diverse, ethnically divided between whites, Indians, Asians, and blacks. Because of the white Afrikaans taking control of the country, a separation of power between whites and other ethnic groups formed an apartheid, which was established in 1948 by the National Party and was abolished in 1994. Under apartheid,

education was segregated between whites, Asians, Indians, and blacks. Even after the fall of apartheid and the increase in spending on blacks, white students still receive four times the amount of funding.

Because of this discrepancy, black teachers were not as qualified as white teachers, with only 40% of black students being able to pass matriculation, whereas with whites it was 95%. To combat this injustice, the post-apartheid government has unified the educational system, where there are no racial distinctions. The goal is to have a student teacher ratio of 40:1. Even with an allocation of 23.9% of total government expenditures going to education, it has been difficult to achieve the needed changes (South Africa, 1999, p. 6). While the student-teacher ratio for whites is 15:1, it is still in the area of 40:1 - 60:1 for blacks. Out of the 10.8 million working people, 30% have no education, 36% have only primary education, 31% have some secondary, and 3% possess a university degree. Out of that 3%, ninety percent are white. As a carryover from apartheid, teaching methods and curriculum are markedly different between blacks and whites. For whites, more cognitive and critical thinking is used; with blacks, rote learning, and skill and drill

are the rule. Another legacy of apartheid is the lack of cooperation between the educational departments. To help remedy this situation the new South African government performed education where compulsory education was now guaranteed for all children regardless of race. Since 1994 the new democratic South Africa has tried to follow the United States model for special education by passing legislation such as the South African School Act (1996) that guaranteed and promoted the inclusion of students with special needs. This law gave parents and students with special needs the right to attend whatever school they chose (Lomofsky, 2001). Still, it has been a slow and tedious process of implementing various projects, such as the Primary Opened Learning Pathway, which is designed to help over-age learners integrate in to age-appropriate classes. Because of this lack of support, most assistance for black special education comes from outside charity organizations (Nkabinde, 1993, pp. 108-109). As with Kenya, South Africa's preparation for employment should have the highest priority, but instead it has the lowest. It can be seen that these countries have various programs to prepare students with LD for the labor force. The United States also has a mixture of programs.

## Characteristics of Vocational Training for Those with Learning Disabilities in the United States

Some vocational courses already mentioned, such as technology and communications, are from Community and Junior colleges, adult schools, and technical/trade schools. According to Sharon Townsend, there are other postsecondary institutions, such as Job Corps and various trade associations. Yet, do such institutions have anything in place to help those with learning disabilities? In gathering data for the project, I went the San Bernardino Adult School in California. I asked the vice principal what arrangements were made on behalf of those with learning disabilities. Her answer was, "Very little except in the form of career advisement and work skills" (Townsend, 2007, pp. 28-30). No efforts are made to give any academic assistance in the way of tutoring, etc, and the reason behind this is actually surprising. The Federal Mandate, which is designed to protect the disabled, PL 94-142 is actually working against the disabled. The mandate states that assistance is to be given up to the age of 22. According to various agencies, such as the San Bernardino Adult School, because of PL 94-142, secondary, not post-secondary institutions must provide this assistance.



Unfortunately, school districts have limited resources set aside for vocational training especially for the disabled, which leaves them in a learning limbo. Surprisingly the solution comes from the very source that created the problem in the first place, the Federal Government.

The Government directed a study on this predicament and came up with an equitable solution in its Research and Evaluation Report Series 91-E, The Learning Disabled in Employment and Training Programs (U.S. Department of, 2005). This report discusses four topics: (1)What Proportion Of Individuals Eligible For Employment, Education And Training Programs Are Likely To Be Learning Disabled? (2)What Is The Current State For Testing And Assessing Adults In Order To Identify the Presence Of Learning Disabilities? (3)What Is The Current State With Respect To Providing Basic Occupational Skill Instruction To Learning Disabled Persons? (4)What Should Be Done To Ensure That Learning Disabled Persons Eligible For Employment And Training Programs Are Properly Served?

Proportion of Those with Learning Disabilities Enrolled in Vocational Programs. In the beginning of the report, two issues immediately come to the fore. First, there are no current statistics on how many of those with

learning disabilities are in the workforce and in vocational programs. Second, there are different definitions for the meaning of learning disabled. It is best to first start with what constitutes persons with learning disabilities. The general definition of a learning disability is one that is "Used to describe a variety of problems in acquiring, storing, and/or retrieving information. The person with learning disabilities has difficulty taking information in through his/her senses and processing that information accurately to the brain" (Payne, updated). This does not mean that person with learning disabilities are unintelligent. To the contrary, many persons with learning disabilities are average or above-average, but some particular disabilities can cause problems with behavior, learning, or employment. Even if a person's disability cannot be cured, the disability can be minimized by concentrating on using one's talents.

According to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program, one substantial limitation among those with learning disabilities is illiteracy. There is no statistical data on the percentage of those with learning disabilities in various training programs, which can be

used to determine the number. However, a rough estimate can be made on the number of illiterate persons enrolled in vocational programs, which can be used to determine those with learning disabilities. Of the total population, 4 to 19 percent are considered illiterate. Of those enrolled in JPTA, 15 to 23 percent have a reading level below seventh-grade, and 25 to 40 percent of those adults qualify for AFDC and JOBS. It is estimated that as many as 80 percent of the persons in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs may have learning disabilities.

Current Testing for Learning Disabilities. The next topic deals with assessing adults to see if they have learning disabilities, in order to determine what services would best be suited for their needs. An individual may not have learning disabilities at all, but merely lacked the opportunity of a proper education. On the other hand, there may be a processing problem. If this is the case, then an appropriate program should be prescribed. In order to do this, the individual must be properly screened. There are various screening methods that are free and easy to use, so that even a layperson can administer them. Since these are preliminary assessments, they should not be considered totally accurate and only used as a precursor to

indicate that a learning disability might exist. If the test subject exhibits a majority of the symptoms then more formal testing would be in order. The cost of formal tests can range from as little as \$1, to as high as \$1000 per person. The majority of tests average between \$2 and \$7 per person.

It is recommended that one test alone is not adequate. The analysis may show a discrepancy between ability and achievement. If such is the case, then a formal test must be administered in both areas. If a discrepancy is then found, it must be determined whether the disability is physical, such as poor vision or hearing, or a processing problem. The professionals who normally administer these tests are medical clinicians, psychologists, and vocational counselors. Once a subject is diagnosed as having a learning disability, then an individualized training program can be developed, which leads to the next topic of providing basic and occupational skills instruction for those with learning disabilities.

Current Occupational Instruction for Those with Learning Disabilities. The informal interviews done by the Urban Institute found that JTPA administrators and service directors do not routinely assess their clients for

learning disabilities, and are normally taught without any intervention programs in place. It is found that if there are no special interventions in place, it is more than likely that the student will become frustrated and either failed or drop out. Some of the interventions recommended are geared toward concentrating on the learning modalities and the strengths of the individual, rather than trying to improve their weaknesses. These techniques are referred to as the Visual Auditory Kinesthetic and Tactile (VAKT) characterization.

Once the student's learning modalities have been recognized, then instruction can be customized. One or more different techniques can be incorporated. Examples of VAKT are the basic approaches for reading, which use phonics, sight words, and word patterns. For a more detailed explanation, see Appendix B.

Accommodations are then made and written into the IEP based on VAKT, such as: breakdown projects, procedures, concepts into their smallest components, provide opportunities for repetition, review and over-learning, allow extra time for testing, make sure the student has acquired one skill before going on to the next, use of technology in the form of tape recorders, laptop computers,

software programs such as Microsoft Word or Dragon Voice Recognition.

The Urban Institute report on vocational training for learning-disabled adults states that, even though extensive research and development was done with academics, there is little concern for vocational. Much has been written on teaching disabled children, but little effort on what to do when they reach adulthood. Much of the assistance offered is already written in the IEP, such as testing accommodations, tape recorders etc, but little effort is put forth in the way of counseling and guidance.

Most efforts are placed on how to prepare for an interview, rather than on the occupational training itself. This is of little benefit if one does not have the job skills to begin with. The majority of the training is placed on personal skills and building confidence and self-esteem. To reinforce this observation, the Research and Demonstration Project on Improving Vocational Rehabilitation of Learning Adults, done by the state of New York (2005) at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, Virginia conducted a series of surveys in which the participants identified their major problems as: difficulty filling out job applications; not knowing where

to go to find a job; or how to get job training. The service providers also included a lack of interviewing skills, a lack of interpersonal skills, low self-esteem, and the inability to maintain a schedule; this I personally observed.

In interviewing two students who are attending Riverside Community College (RCC), I observed this lack of concern to be the rule, rather than the exception. One student, Diane, had been diagnosed as bipolar, along with having dyslexia. Little help was offered in public school so that Diane had to learn to work with her dyslexia much on her own. When she began attending RCC, she informed them of her dyslexia. The only assistance offered was in the way of tape recorders and videos. Another student, Trish, tried applying to the RCC nursing program. She was denied enrollment because her test scores did not allow her to qualify and it was recommended that she first attend an adult school, such as the Educational Options Center (EOC) in Riverside, California, to raise her test scores. While there, her counselor spent most of his time discouraging her from continuing with her education and that she should work at places like Blockbuster. The assistance offered

was merely to help her find work as soon as possible and to get her off her counselor's caseload.

From a subjective point of view, I have found that if a person has a measure of expertise in their trade or occupation, confidence and self-esteem will follow. Each person has strengths and weaknesses; as to whether one wishes to improve their strengths, or work on their weaknesses, is open to opinion, personal desire, and commitment. However, some weaknesses must be acknowledged. A person with dyslexia would find it difficult to work as a data entry operator or any person with visual conceptual problems would not do well as a bricklayer. There are certain tests, though, that can pair abilities with job opportunities, and can save time and effort. These include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Harrington-O'Shea Career Decision-Making System.

After a career path has been chosen, a concerted effort is made to adjust the training to the participant's learning style. This adjusting is referred to as "Alternative training." With closer examination this "Alternative training," is nothing more than special education. Special education is sometimes referred to as



"simply good teaching, and which should come natural to any respectable educator."

Some facilities are, on their own, adjusting their manner of instruction and curriculum to meet the needs of their LD clients. The Rockefeller Foundation's Minority Female Single Parent (MFSP) program began accommodating its instruction for those experiencing learning difficulties. While a few needed more written instruction because of their auditory deficits, others needed more hands-on. Other accommodations offered were: adjusting the pace of the class, more time to practice on equipment, working in small groups, and teacher's aides or volunteers acting as tutors. A more detailed set of accommodations have been outlined in the Compensations, Accommodations, Modifiers, and Strategies (CAMS) to help in vocational rehabilitation. An example of this is the Welfare-to-Work programs for the learning-disabled initiated in New York State.

The State Department of Labor (DOL) worked in partnership with Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) and the State University of New York University for Adult and Workforce Development (SUNY VCAWD) to develop a project that screened and worked with numerous individuals with learning

disabilities. The project worked with different rehabilitation agencies in various counties. The goal was to transition persons with learning disabilities on welfare into the workforce. More than 75% of those screened using the Washington State Screening process were diagnosed with some type of cognitive or mental health issues (State of New York, 2005). The Urban Institute of Washington report confirmed that 25% to 40% of those screened receiving welfare assistance have a learning disability. The screening process took into account a wide range of factors: past work history, past educational records, including a self-report and being enrolled in special education or similar programs, previous testing for Learning Disabilities (LD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or similar programs.

After the testing was done a Service Plan was developed for the individual who is then referred to a job or social skills development program, or psychological counseling. Some were eligible for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). The case management was handled by a job coach, or what was commonly referred to as a service navigator. The purpose of the service navigator was to guide their

clients through the various steps outlined in their Service Plan, insuring a measure of success. The employers were informed of the benefits of hiring and training employees with learning disabilities, one of which is State or Federal subsidizing, with the service navigators acting as go-betweens for both their clients and prospective employers.

The Urban Institute's report concludes with these suggestions: incorporate instructional strategies into job search training and pre-employability components. This simply means integrating special educational techniques, such as modification of the curriculum, videos, more hands-on, and small group instruction; combine basic skills instruction with functional occupational skills instruction. This is incorporating special educational techniques, such as reading and math, into the vocational training curriculum; avoid arbitrary referral of persons with low reading skills to possibly inappropriate remediation programs. One reason for the high dropout rates and failures among those in adult education is the waste of time and resources enrolling adults with learning disabilities in traditional programs without some kind of accommodations; at the national level, DOL officials should

consider the establishment of an interagency workgroup on learning disabilities. This means gathering representatives from vocational rehabilitation, adult education, JOBS, and vocational education together to share ideas; the DOL should review the need for a department research and development agenda to examine the learning-disabled population and current practices for serving them, since there is no centralized source for organizing and directing instruction for those with learning disabilities.

#### Current Training Programs for Those with Learning Disabilities

Convoluting Vocational Programs. Some current Learning Disabled training programs are supposed to be vocationally based, but instead are convoluted into mental health, drug rehabilitation, and other programs besides occupational. A close examination of the various pilot programs in the State of New York funded and researched under the Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) and the State University of New York University for Adult and Workforce Development (SUNY VCAWD) and its partnership with the DOL will reveal this to be the case. In examining these various programs, it would be well to keep in mind some

questions: (1) How were the individuals in these programs diagnosed as LD or MR? (2) What services were offered? (3) How much emphasis was placed on job training? (4) What was the percentage of those employed after finishing the programs?

The programs examined are Erie County English Pilot, Franklin County LD Pilot, Niagara Bridge Program Pilot, Oneida County LD Pilot, Oswego Industries Pilot, St. Lawrence County Sail-to-Success Pilot, and Winchester ELOPE Pilot. For more details on these pilot projects, see Appendix A.

In going over the characteristics and successes of these programs, it was found that: of all the participants screened, between 70% and 80% were found to have profound mental health conditions that made it difficult for them to obtain or retain employment. Most were diagnosed with learning disabilities or mildly mentally retarded (MR), along with a history of sexual/physical abuse. In one program, the clients were found to have IQs ranging from 70-80; the majority of services centered on mental health issues, with minimal efforts toward job training. The lesson learned was the need for more occupational training, with limited emphasis placed on job training, mental health

issues, and drug rehabilitation. As to success rates, claims varied with each one claiming success. While one agency claimed 100% success rate if only eight more of their participants completed the program, the average rate of employment after completing the program was about fifty percent.

In looking over the information we find that students are tested as to their abilities in order to design an individualized program. With these a career path can be chosen. Regrettably, little is done after this. While government agencies have their own alternative training programs others do not. The underlying reason is the degree of importance placed on vocation. New York's various Pilot programs are a case in point. A great deal of attention was given to mental health, while minimal to vocational. Since preparation for the workforce was placed in the background, many participants were simply burned out going from one program to the next. In addition, no efforts were made or suggested that training be flexible or adaptable to the students' abilities.

Vocational Programs Rooted in Job Training. Two vocational programs briefly mentioned that have had a measure of success and are funded and managed by the

government are Job Corps, a federal program, and California Conservation Corps, a State program. Both programs have two things in common: vocation as the major goal and remedial education as the second.

Job Corps. Those enrolling in Job Corps had to show their school transcripts, along with going through a series of assessment tests. If they scored low on math or Language Arts, they were placed in the appropriate remedial classes. After successfully completing the classes, they transferred to the vocational programs. Each of the programs had certain academic prerequisites and requirements. The program with the lowest prerequisites was gardening, while surveying has the highest, since it requires a working knowledge of trigonometry. Counseling and mental health care is also offered, in addition to drug rehabilitation. Unfortunately, many of the participants did not appreciate the benefits of Job Corps, but used it as a stopover before living on the streets.

California Conservation Corps. California Conservation Corps (CCC) is similar to Job Corps, with its emphasis on job training. Those applying also had to bring a set of high school transcripts or diploma and go through a series of assessment tests to find where their learning

abilities are. If they graduated from high school, but scored low on the tests they were placed in a remedial program. If they had not graduated from high school, their transcripts were closely examined to see how many credits and what subjects were lacking for graduation. The core curriculum was then centered on just needed subjects. One difference between Job Corps and California Conservation Corps is that CCC participants can enroll in a vocational program while also attending remedial or high school classes, whereas with Job Corps the students need to finish their academic courses first.

With both programs, one needs a high school diploma or GED before receiving a vocational certificate of completion. Some vocations, such as forest fighter, provide excellent benefits and salary. Having the students obtain a high school diploma in conjunction with a vocational certificate gave them more reason to take their academic courses more seriously. Sadly, as with Job Corps, very few of the participants appreciated how much was being offered to them, and used the CCC as a weigh station before arriving on the streets.



Outcomes of Both Programs. Both programs were designed to give students well paying jobs if they chose to take advantage of the resources and training being offered. One negative aspect is that these programs had become revolving doors, with no benefit to students or the program. Part of this is because of the lack of discipline when it comes to academic standards. The solution is simple. The applicants need to be informed that not meeting certain academic standards after a probationary period will result in dismissal. The standards can include completing assigned work on time with a passing grade. There can be exceptions. If a student is putting forth 100% effort and still having difficulty, then accommodations can be made. If this is consistently enforced, it will act as warning as to the gravity of the program.

Both programs made an honest and sincere effort in using remedial instruction to help the students complete the academic components of their vocational training. The down side is that there is simply not enough funding to expand their programs. Another solution is the use of adult and vocational schools.

Adult and vocational schools, along with colleges, offer a wide range of career choices, and are open to

suggestions. Instruction can be made more accessible to their students with learning disabilities at minimal or no cost at all. The strategy behind this comes from the U.S. Department of Labor's Research and Evaluation Report Series 91-E.

### Future Solutions

The DOL's Report Series 91-E suggests that instructional strategies be incorporated into the job training, "One reason for the high drop-out and failure rate in adult education programs may be that the classes are not designed to accommodate the learning disabled. It may be a waste of time and resources to simply refer LD adults into a traditional education program" (p.56). These accommodations can come in the form of one-on-one tutoring, modification of the text material, and small group instruction, which can work with any existing program whether it is adult, vocational, or college. To assist in this, student teaching and mentoring programs from various universities can be used.

Most universities have teaching credential programs. Part of a teaching program requires the student to perform a certain number of hours of voluntary teaching. Some of this time could be used in assisting students with learning

disabilities in their post-secondary vocational courses. A student teacher whose subject matter is either math or science could assist in that area, while those in liberal studies could lend support in general subjects. The bottom line for success is using what is already in place. In order to accomplish this, we need to compare the strategies used in other countries to see what can be modified and tailored to American policy.

Both France and England have central control over vocational education. Both countries offer certificates of completion in various careers. The difference between the programs is that France has more centralized control, whereas in Britain most of the control is held by employer associations and trade unions. In addition, France's apprenticeship programs have the force of law; in the UK they only have the guidance of the trade unions. These differences might account for the disparities of enrollment: France's 40% to Britain's 10%. As to weakness, France's approach toward vocational education is one of segregation toward those with LD, with some in the disabled community going so far as to question France's policy of equal education.

Russia's policy is also one of segregation, along with a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum. This has left the disabled out of Russia's present prosperity.

China's role in tightly controlling education has resulted in a rich and balanced curriculum that meets the demands of the global economy. This concern for educated citizenry includes the disabled as well. School enrollment is guaranteed, and vocational opportunities are chosen according to the disability. There are also workshops subsidized by the government, which ensures employment.

Hong Kong's vocational training is centrally controlled by the Manpower Development Committee. The responsibility for vocational development is subsidized to the Vocational Training Council (VTC), which controls the vocational colleges and schools. For those with disabilities there are three Skills Centers with over 600 full-time training facilities, 100 of them being residential. This training, though, is contingent on passing a work assessment test. If the student is not able to pass, there are sheltered workshops. The weakness of Hong Kong's approach toward the disabled is the lack of extra instruction from primary to secondary grades.

In Kenya there are competing interests and limited resources. An effort is being made to assist those with LD, but it is interesting to note that in spite of the numeral 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio in academics, little, if any, effort is devoted toward vocational. It is felt that it is the family's responsibility to care for their members, regardless of their disabilities.

Nigeria's approach is different. Instead of using a centralized approach, the government uses the United Nations to form the Centralized Community-based Vocational Rehabilitation (CBVR) project. The goal is to train and then set up the disabled in various businesses, such as animal husbandry, cloth weaving, radio and television repair, wood crafting, tailoring, and motorcycle repair, to mention just a few. Most of this training is done through apprenticeships. While this may seem out of place in the United States, it is perfectly suited for Nigeria's economy.

South Africa is still encumbered by its apartheid legacy. The government has tried to pattern itself after the United States by promoting inclusion of the disabled into regular classrooms. Still, this has been a slow and

tedious process, with most support coming from outside sources.

There are strengths and weaknesses with these assorted programs, but there are commonalities. Most of these countries have centralized control over the vocational education; though the degree of control varies from country to country. Britain's vocational training is mostly under the businesses and trade unions, whereas France, China, and Hong Kong have total control and so are able to adapt the needs of the economy. Nigeria uses the help of the United Nations. The training and employment opportunities also vary.

In France and Britain, a student graduates with a vocational diploma or certificate, which allows them to be placed at an entry-level position. Nigeria's apprenticeship program allows graduates to set up their own businesses, businesses which fulfill the needs of the local economies. If by chance one is unable to obtain work after graduation, they have the option of sheltered workshops. Either way the government will place a person in some form of employment that suits their abilities. These positive measures can be applied to America. As already observed, there are some vocational programs already in place:

California has California Conservation Corps and the federal government, Job Corps. Both of these programs have positives and negatives. Another federal program is the Federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

In 1994 the Federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) was passed and more than \$1.5 billion was granted to the States to implement career preparation in the classroom. Career preparation is different from vocational training, in that its main goal is career awareness. The students are to examine what career they might pursue and the steps needed to achieve that goal. To accomplish this, STWOA attempted to correct three areas of concern: (1) a lack of connection between school and work that has led many youths to be unmotivated in school and to experience subsequent difficulty in moving out of low-paying jobs; (2) completing school with sufficient skills needed for the labor market; (3) increasing labor market demands for complex thinking, close teamwork, and the ability to learn on the job (Allen, 2003, p. 3). Other goals were included to increase (1) school-based initiatives such as career links to academic curriculum and career awareness activities (2) work-based activities, such as job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships (3) connecting

activities such as the development of partnerships with employers and postsecondary institutions (Allen, 2003, p. 3.

What has been a success of STWOA and how does it compare with Europe's apprenticeship programs? A report done by Ann Allen and David Newmark entitled, "What Do We Know About the Affects of School-to-Work?" is a case study of the state of Michigan which shows there are some serious shortfalls. Michigan was one of the first States to implement STWOA and linked it to other School-to-Work programs such as the Career Preparation System. The purpose was to direct students to various occupations, such as Arts and Communications, Business Management, Engineering/Manufacturing, Health Science, Human Services, and Natural Resources and Agriculture. This was to be accomplished by educational training, career assessment, and a plan of action where the students were to pick and choose from a list of careers and learn how to train for them. Yet, no mention was made of apprenticeships or training.

How did Michigan fair in achieving these goals? With the first goal of decreasing the number of youth being unmotivated in school and therefore helping them move out



of low-paying jobs, the report showed that there was a decrease in the number of participating students who were currently employed in jobs other than those affiliated with the work-based program; from 60% to 50%. The reason given was a slowing economy. In addition, the class of 1995 showed a decrease in the number of students employed outside the School-to-Work programs (71% in 1995 compared to 78% in 1994 and 73% in 1992 and 1993). The second concern of youth competing in the global market showed that more students enrolled in college level courses, from 61% in 1997 to 69% in 2001. But there was a decrease in the number of students moving on to jobs outside the program. Finally, the goal of increasing complex thinking, close teamwork, and the ability to learn on the job did not materialize since the report showed that three fifths of the students participating in the Education for Employment hardly used any of the skills and training taught.

Concerning the goal of developing partnerships with employers and having work-based activities, such as internships and apprenticeships, nothing was enacted. In fact it was the opposite. Both the parents and the teachers actually opposed the School-to-Work program, fearing that it was an occupational program and would not

direct students toward college. Simply put, they wanted the students to be professors rather than plumbers. On a side note, some plumbers earn \$45 an hour, which is more than some professors earn.

Even though the report was on the various work initiative programs in Michigan, they mirror the experiences I have had working at Silverado high school in California. While teaching career development (Career Plus) at Silverado, I noticed that little dealt with looking into various careers. The curriculum mostly dealt with reading poems, stories, developing goals such as achieving happiness and contentment, along with accepting the fact many persons would experience periods of high unemployment and that no career is secure. In order to introduce my students to different career options, I borrowed tapes from the Career Development Center. The tapes examined various professions, such as cosmetology, masonry, and computer programming. When I asked the principal, Mrs. Levine, if there were any vocations offered, I was given no specific answer except for food service and secretarial, and to go to the Career Development Center on campus. There I learned that the only resources offered were the same career tapes I

borrowed, the local newspapers, and the use of computers to look up employment opportunities found on the web. What the Special Education department offered was no better; they directed the students to outside sources such as, ROP, Adult School, Job Corps, California Conservation Corps, the military, or college.

When examining the various outside services, I found little in the way of assisting students with learning disabilities. In speaking with one of the vice principals of the San Bernardino branch of adult education, Janice Roselius, I found there was nothing in place to assist these students. If they had a problem with reading the material or with math, nothing was available in the way of tutoring or modifying the curriculum. While working with the California Conservation Corps, the only assistance offered was Muir Charter School, which helped students to get either a high school diploma, or GED. If any of the students had a problem with the academics, Muir Charter would be there to assist with one-on-one tutoring. The Federally operated Job Corps also had academic assistance for those who had learning disabilities in the form of remedial math and a Language Arts program, along with helping to place the students in the vocation that

best suited their abilities. Yet, this is minuscule when compared to the national School-to-Work programs in Europe. Europe does not use sources outside of their public school system to prepare their students for the workplace, as in the United States. Instead they take sole responsibility. When a student graduates, he/she can begin an entry-level position. They have a trade or profession on which to support themselves if they wish to continue in that line of work. One of the solutions can be seen by what is implemented in these other countries, a national vocational program.

One of the founding fathers of American education, Samuel Knox, believed in establishing a cohesive Federal and State educational program. Knox was the president of Frederick (Maryland) Academy and the principal of Baltimore College. In his book "An Essay on the Best System of Liberal Education," Knox encouraged a "uniform system of national education," in which public schools, State and National universities would be under a board of national education. This was to ensure a national curriculum with identical curriculum, textbooks, and standards for the whole nation (Cremin, 1988, p. 123). This system is similar to the national program implemented in France where

each locality is under the central government's control, but has latitude in implementing various vocational apprenticeships based on the need of the local businesses. The cost is shared by both the government and the business establishment. Because businesses have a vested interest in these vocational apprenticeships, they do their best in hiring graduates in order to recoup the costs of training them. This same model could be implemented in the United States. The Federal government could have central oversight, guaranteeing the continued funding and implementation of vocational programs, while the states could tailor the vocational programs to the needs of their business community. Undoubtedly, such a system would require a tremendous effort on the part of the Federal government, but if the results would imitate those in France, it would be well worth the effort

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

France's and China's centralized control is in stark difference to America's Separation of Powers ideology. No matter which providence or state you go to it is the same. The central government determines the qualifications for teaching, thereby eliminating "mixed" standards. Unfortunately, this lack of centralized control is written into the U.S. Constitution. States have certain rights, such as education, that take precedence over the Federal Government, which has led to a decline in the importance and funding of occupational training. In Europe, vocational training is simply taken for granted. Children between the ages of 11-15 start making choices as to their career major. The European objective is that even if a person decides in the future to change careers and that endeavor is not successful, they still have the occupation they learned in high school to fall back on. This lessens the fear and stress that comes with graduation.

Right from the onset, European children are made aware of the courses necessary to obtain a certificate of

completion, and the importance of reading and math, since these skills are applied to any vocation. In America, it is the opposite. In speaking with my students about their career choices, along with the courses and the time needed to graduate, only 3 out of 28 students knew what was required. When asked what they plan to do after graduating, they had no idea except living with their parents. This lack of purpose was reflected in their schoolwork.

Competing in the global economy is competitive and difficult. This is why in most countries schooling is spent on preparing to compete in today's market. Since the United States has shifted from a manufacturing-based economy to service-based one, service-based vocational education now plays a vital role. For those with learning disabilities, this can be devastating if accommodations are not made for their disability. It is the responsibility of the government to meet those needs. If not, then the alternatives are becoming homeless, institutionalized, a burden on their family, or prison, with the hope of being self-sustaining out of their reach. How each country fulfills this role is based on its politics and culture.

Some governments have been able to transition those with LD with minimal difficulty, others have not.

The United States was, at one time, the leader in this transition process, but has lost sight in favor of higher test scores. This can be remedied if the federal government is willing to make serious policy changes that favor a national vocational program, one that the government has total oversight and can be adapted to meet each state's individual needs. In addition, there must be some form of alternative instruction in place, one that individualizes the program to the student's abilities. If this is carried out in a competent and well organized manner then there should be no reason why Americans with learning disabilities cannot participate in today's workforce.



APPENDIX A  
CURRENT TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH LEARNING  
DISABILITIES

### Erie County English Pilot

The Erie County English Pilot program began in March, 2002 with 80% of the clients being diagnosed as with learning disabilities or mildly mentally retarded. Data showed that many of the participants had problems in school, were adolescent parents, and had no previous preparation for employment. Many demonstrated mental and physical disorders from childhood, sexual/physical abuse, along with spending time in foster care. Many did not follow through on the services offered.

### Franklin County LD Pilot

Franklin County was the first of the LD projects, established in March 2001. The participants were found to have multiple emotional and family problems. The services offered included: job coaching and assistance, accommodations for additional time to complete tasks, presentation of job skills and training material in either visual-spatial or verbal modalities (depending on the person's strengths), exploration of volunteer work as an introduction into the workforce and readiness for full-time competitive employment.

The pilot provided not only mental health care, but an Eight-Week Survival Skills/Job Readiness Workshop. Forty seven percent of the 70 participants found employment.

#### Niagara Bridge Program Pilot

This project lasted only 10 months. Those found eligible were enrolled in a Job Readiness Training program. Out of twenty tested, six were found to have learning disabilities, seven were borderline functioning, and twelve suffered from major depression. Many had childcare problems, along with their own severe emotional traumas that hindered their learning abilities. What was reported was that the project needed a stronger connection with job development, and more services such as job coaching and mentoring.

#### Oneida County LD Pilot

After the screening, seventy-one participants were enrolled in the program. Most of them were young single women with children from different fathers. A large number of them also suffered from sexual or physical abuse, along with various medical conditions that made it difficult for them to function. Most had IQs in the range of the 70s to low 80s. Even though almost all had no substantial employment in the past, it was felt that with proper mental

health treatment and remediation programs, the clients could obtain full-time employment. It was felt that even if one out of four participants became employed, this would be a major success.

#### Oswego Industries Pilot

Oswego Industries is a community-based rehabilitation center in central New York. The center has connections in the community for neuropsychological services, which allowed for testing and counseling. The facility offered counseling, medical care, childcare, education, training, job development, dental care, and inpatient mental health care. After the screening, twenty-two individuals were enrolled, with male and female clients evenly divided. Seven were employed, with three being promoted, three enrolled in full-time college, the other eight were in a job development program.

#### St. Lawrence County Sail-to-Success Pilot

The purpose behind this project was to assist "hard-to-serve" welfare clients. At the completion of the screening forty-five were enrolled. Thirty-five were enrolled in some form of adult education, twenty-five became employed, and six obtained SSI. Many had mental health problems, but did not receive evaluations or help.

Because there were delays in the program and funding, many participants became impatient and lost interest.

#### Winchester ELOPE Pilot

ELOPE stands for Educational Learning Options Program for Employment. Forty-eight of those screened had mental health problems. Many resisted the program because of being labeled "disabled." It was only after an understanding of what learning disabilities are and how to deal with them that resistance broke down. Many of the participants suffered from "program fatigue," that is going from one program to the next, with mixed results. The one concern that stood out was the need for more individualized attention in areas of academics, with more emphasis on vocational training.

APPENDIX B

VISUAL AUDITORY KINESTHETIC AND TACTILE PHONICS, SIGHT  
WORDS, AND WORD PATTERNS

Examples of Visual Auditory Kinesthetic and Tactile (VAKT) are the basic approaches for reading, which use phonics, sight words, and word patterns: Phonetics Approach - this approach follows the traditional concept of learning the beginning alphabet sounds, the letter combinations, digraphs, trigraphs, phonographs, encoding, decoding, sentence structure, spelling rules, learning reading generalizations, and writing; Sight Word Approach - this approach is the technique of teaching and recognizing whole words. The approach relies heavily on the role memory (an ability that many learning-disabled

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